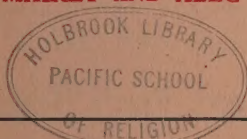


THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER



OCTOBER 1952

Vol. III No. 10

SOME NEGLECTED ASPECTS
OF THE WELFARE STATE



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THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE
COMMON LIFE

Vol. III. No. 10.

OCTOBER 1952

Monthly Letter

AT its annual conference last month the Christian Frontier Council took "The Welfare State" as the subject of its discussions. The purpose of the conference was partly to estimate the social tendencies and opportunities created by the legislation comprised under that heading, but mainly to consider current attitudes towards it, not excluding the attitudes of those who were present! Now that we have a State formally committed to the abolition of poverty and unemployment, and thereby made responsible for an ever-widening range of public welfare, its ultimate success depends upon the wholeheartedness of the citizens' co-operation. It is a question whether all good citizens, including many in the churches, have yet awakened to the change in mental attitudes and the re-direction of social energies that are required. This quiet but effective revolution came by party-political agreement and has developed without substantial political opposition, but there remain in some circles plenty of doubts about the principles it embodies and fears about the extent and pace of the changes it is making. The result is, in many individuals, an attitude of neutral acceptance, inhibited by subconscious resistances. Some of these are dealt with by our contributor Mr. Daniel Jenkins, in a

paper that was submitted to the Council and is published on a later page.

It must be said at once that the general effect of this conference was altogether favourable to the social security measures, both as a right development of the responsibilities of the modern state and as an experiment in social order with full claim upon our moral assent and practical contribution. There was informed criticism, both in principle and in detail, of anomalies and over-proliferations in some of the new services, and recognition of moral demands implied by such an economic structure and still insufficiently realized. But various theoretical objections were traced, at least in part, to prejudice or lack of information¹, and several of those present found themselves adopting a much more welcoming attitude to the Welfare State than they had done before.

Necessity Freely Accepted

It is wise to remember (a point elaborated more than once in the course of these discussions) how far the measures we now call the Welfare State have come about by necessity. At each step, statesmen have been moved to act, to an extent not obvious from the reasons chiefly emphasized in public, by prudent calculation of what it had become dangerous not to do. An age of brilliant practical achievements was producing a social wastage that it was perilous to ignore. The extent to which our welfare revolution has been imposed by circumstances and represents efforts to forestall worse evils is too little realized, for it is a useful corrective to moral complacency. The State has been forced to undertake what the people would not, or could no longer, do for themselves. Nevertheless, the particular ways in which the State, with popular assent, has responded to these necessities have been chosen by free decision in the light of

¹ Probably the best way of becoming better informed is to read Miss M. Penelope Hall's recent book, *The Social Services of Modern England* (Routledge and Kegan Paul).

humane and social ideals. And the great relief which has ensued from the removal of all the more glaring evils of insecurity and inequality within our society has furnished us with a vastly altered basis for all the activities of our lives, far more so than we have yet realized. Whether the outcome will be good or bad depends upon the faith, hope and charity with which we accept this change and build upon it.

The End beyond Welfare

The Welfare State suggests certain speculative questions which it is more tempting than profitable to dwell upon. Is it, for instance, diminishing the capacity for self-help, individual and social, impairing initiative and lowering the incentive to succeed? If some evidence of this can be adduced, so can signs to the contrary, where improved conditions such as better housing have stimulated higher ambitions and liberated new energies. It is the circumstances of people that have been changed, not their moral capacities, and we have no right and no ability to predict what they will make of these circumstances. What is however important—as Labour leaders are especially well aware—is the need of a further clarification of purpose, a new goal to strive towards, now that a long phase of social idealism has ended in the realization of its primary objectives.

Various ends beyond the Welfare State are being proposed, and the political favourite seems to be complete social equality. This means different things to different people, and if it is read as the absence of class-consciousness, as the approachability and ease of conversation between man and man, our society is certainly further from it than some others, notably that of America—which shows that the spirit of social equality can be approached by a road very different from the one we are taking. Such openness of social intercourse is a great value, and there is reason to believe that we are making progress towards it, partly if not chiefly because the new conditions tend to increase

psychic as well as physical security and to reduce the suspicions which are legacies from the previous order and have little present justification. Further progress in this direction is inherent in our conception of Welfare rather than a goal beyond it; and, as we know, too much insistence on equality as a social aim can be a great danger to political liberty. How far economic equality is a necessary condition of social equality is still a contentious question.

Community

Another aim beyond Welfare which is being mooted is a benevolent policy of capital exportation in order to extend similar economic and social benefits to the colonial peoples, by equipping them with the means and knowledge necessary to the sharing of a standard of life nearer to our own. Britain is already committed to do what is possible to raise colonial living standards, so this is a valid project. It has an appeal to the generosity of the people which should not be underrated, but it will depend upon the solution of other problems of capitalization to which we shall refer later on. The truth is, however, that all the aspirations beyond the Welfare State converge towards the hope of Christian community: they depend upon how far the impersonal community created by State action can be infused with the personal relations of Christian living. A good deal was said at this Council's conference about the rôle of the churches in this situation. One idea was that they should undertake a special task of interpreting the meaning of the new society to the people. Effective interpretation, however, can be only the realization, in living example, of the conception by which the Welfare State has been partly inspired but which no legislation can wholly realize. The commonsense conclusion for churches is therefore to build up their own strength, both in quality and in numbers, not so much to preach community as incarnate it.

Thus far we have been considering moral and spiritual aspects of the question, irrespective of the resources that

may be available to provide material welfare. It is for the future to show whether our welfare revolution is the preparation for rising prosperity or whether it is an insurance against social dissension in a period of economic hardship. We must be prepared for either, and pay due attention to the practical realities.

The Welfare Prospect

While working-out its new conception of distributive welfare, Britain has to carry out alterations in its whole system of production and consumption, adapting its business life to a changed world where it can no longer live by the same pattern of activities which once made it the richest country on earth. This presents a task of re-adaptation and re-education that is comparable in scope to the Industrial Revolution, and will have to be accomplished in a much shorter time. Mr. Churchill's note of alarm about the "trap-door" under our feet, in his speech of June 11, lost much of its effect from the almost reassuring attitude assumed by the Government in a subsequent Parliamentary debate about the economic prospect. What he had in mind, however, was not the immediate balance of the nation's finances but this much more formidable and lasting challenge. Since then a well-prepared series of articles in the *Observer* has outlined the position in which the country's livelihood stands, and given a very intelligent and careful estimate of the kind of measures that will have to be taken if calamity is to be prevented.¹

The nature of the national problem, if not its urgency, is at last being widely recognized: that was evident, e.g., in the debates at the annual Trade Union Congress. But much more public enlightenment is needed before it will be possible to execute and co-ordinate all the measures that will be needed. For example, we cannot double farm

¹ *Rethinking our Future*: Now reprinted as a pamphlet and obtainable from the *Observer*, Tudor Street, E.C. 4.

production by 1960, as with good reason we are now urged to do, without pouring more capital into agriculture between then and now than anyone has yet calculated. The same is true of the required increase of coal production, and of the provision of means for fuel-saving both domestic and industrial. Another extensive outlay is demanded for the intensification of industrial processes if British products are to hold or regain their custom abroad, including a big increase of highly educated workers, which is itself equivalent to an added capital expenditure. All this is required of us at a time when industry is having difficulty enough to replace and modernize the equipment it has, and on top of it comes the cruel burden of an armament race which was unforeseen when Britain's plans for Social Security were drafted under the influence of the Beveridge Reports. These immense requirements for the production and protection of future welfare cannot but take away money and means from the welfare available in the present.

The Retiring Age

Wage and salary increases cannot of course affect this situation, except for the worse. Nor can we hope for any quantitative improvement or extension of the welfare services in such conditions ; we shall be lucky if they escape curtailment. There is however comfort in the thought that the continuation of full employment ought not to present too much difficulty, unless too many people dislike the kinds of employment on offer. It is most probable that the demand for workers, unskilled, skilled and highly trained will for long continue to exceed the supply. This will also react upon at least one sector of the national insurance. For it is now very doubtful whether a population which on the average lives so much longer than before can or ought to be pensioned off at 60 or 65. The last Ministry of Labour figures show a greater number of workers leaving industry than entering it, a fact not accounted for by unemployment or emigration. Some at least of this loss of

man and woman power must represent the earlier superannuation which it was one of the aims of the National Insurance scheme to provide for. But the conventional age for retirement already looks like a relic from days when the nation's health was poorer, work more arduous and life shorter. Our welfare planners did not realize, as the latest Annual Report of the Insurance Ministry shows, that the cost of such pensions would rapidly exceed the funds to pay them—rising, within a generation to come, to an excessive proportion of the national income. Since the people pay for these benefits, the State is responsible for supplying them, but something more will have to be done to encourage later retirement, and it can hardly be very difficult to contrive. Our present population needs to work, as a general rule, up to the seventies; and presumably it will be increasingly capable of doing so, as well as happier in a longer span of social activity.

To return to the general problem—if support for a national effort of the kind mentioned above presents itself as a moral and indeed a Christian duty, it is because much more is at stake than the maintenance of a “standard of life”, which is still a relatively privileged one. Life itself would be at hazard if there were a serious failure to adapt the economy of this crowded island to that of a world which is so radically altered. The productive ideals and techniques of our present culture are in no way sacrosanct to Christians as such, and their extension all over the world is fraught with spiritual peril, because they tend to raise productiveness into the supreme value, to the neglect of worship and the self-understanding of the human spirit.¹ For men to find a deep satisfaction in ordinary work as service or vocation is possible, though not easy, where the ruling values of a society are religious: it becomes increasingly hard where working conditions are continually re-shaped by an over-

¹ See Pieper: *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, reviewed in the August *Frontier*.

emphasis upon utility and technique. Yet for dear life's sake work must now go forward, and harder yet, in much the same forms as it has now assumed. We can take courage from the fact that the Christian tradition—or as some would say post-Christian feeling—in this country has made possible a great improvement in the amenity and security of working-class life, and a real, gradual amelioration of human relations and conditions in the work itself. We believe that the British people will accept the challenge, once more to live spare and strenuous days with faith in their future ; and that if they do, the outcome will be good, not for Britain only, but for all the other races and nations whose efforts to live the life of technological progress will bring them, sooner or later, to much the same difficulties.

INTERIM

Afterthoughts on Lund

Reading the reports of and about the Lund Ecumenical Conference on Faith and Order, one cannot escape a feeling that this great effort is at a very critical point. Mr. Kenneth Grubb, in an almost sardonic letter in the *Church of England Newspaper*, plainly hints that unless it is considered "feasible and even remotely desirable to act on what we accept" conferences of this kind had better stop. Though he was not physically present at Lund, Mr. Grubb's protest will carry weight with some who were, because they found themselves with similar feelings on the final day. Before coming to a desperate conclusion it is advisable however to read the report, to underline its most challenging admissions and provisions, and then imagine how such conference would have appeared only fifteen years ago, exchanging such mutual greetings as this one did with the 75th German Catholic Congress at Berlin. One should further take account of the fact that the delegates went deeper into the most controversial questions than any previous meeting of its kind, including the decisive issue of intercommunion. But all this sharpened the great dilemma that the movement exists to resolve, and increased the sense of frustration felt by many as they came away.

Why does no catalytic emerge to combine the separate elements? Many, like Mr. Grubb, "get the impression that at some point someone (or church) must make a break through". But such efforts force us to realize anew that churches are, fundamentally, organized institutions, whereas *the Church* is a fellowship and communion of persons in Christ. It is the living experience of unity in a common vision and in personal fellowship that is movingly felt at such meetings, but no less quickly lost when the subject changes to the relations between their organizations—which are the terms of the agenda. The hard fact is that whilst the intermittent ecumenical fellowship can be, to the individual, the wider and potentially higher community, his own home church is the deeper. So long as that is so, can one expect a church, as such, to lose its life to gain it? There is thus a real problem of *time* in this endeavour. But that does not mean a need for patience only. There is no painlessly gradual evolution here; nothing is to be gained but at the cost of painful impatience.

* * * *

Religious Archaism

Among "non-theological" obstacles to unity among Christians, the Lund Report instances "archaism of devotional habit, which prevents the development of liturgical forms suitable to the age in which we live". This is certainly a factor of capital importance and needs constant study (for the oldest "archaisms" are by no means always the most divisive). Less satisfactory, however, is the only concrete case given as follows:

"we do well to question what the view of nature implicit in the canticle *Benedicite* conveys to men equipped with skill to effect the colossal transformations of natural forces which are a commonplace of our day."

Perhaps the suggestion here is that we need some liturgies giving a more modern expression to the spirit of the 8th Psalm, which thanks God for all his works and especially for having made man but little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour as a ruler over those works. Here is scope for a liturgical genius. But a difficulty about giving liturgical expression to man's feelings about his own works is that his estimation of them changes. He rather despises those of the past, over-esteems those of to-day and is often nervous about those of other men: whereas the chemistry, for instance, going on inside a termite still—and probably forever—holds mysteries ever

more admirable in the eyes of a scientist the more he knows. Is there, after all, anything really out-of-date in the *Benedicite* except the bit about Ananias, Azarias and Misael? At least, we hope the other allusion, to "holy and humble men of heart" is not totally anachronistic.

* * * *

The New Europe

The advance towards European unity is at the present moment outstripping ecumenical progress. In this country a prevailing disbelief that union between the great continental nations is at all possible has lowered the tone of British participation in the Strasbourg Council of Europe, even though its inauguration, the first firm step to confederation, owed much to British initiative. When at last six of the Council member-states, which had formed the Coal and Steel Community, announced their intention of also going ahead to political federation with or without the rest, British press references were still scant and sceptical. But it is now clear that the coalescence, political as well as economic, of France, Western Germany, Italy and the Low Countries has acquired a momentum unlikely to be stopped, and it is a question whether Britain could in the end afford to stand out of such a combination. Mr. Eden lost no time before taking steps lest this group should erect its political machinery outside the original Council of fifteen powers and thereby reduce the latter to insignificance. He has pressed, with strong French support, for the inclusion of the six countries' political combination as a special structure "within the framework". That will hardly prevent such a weighty group from wielding dominant influence in the whole; but it assures the others, including Britain, of a consultative status in relation to the proposed union, and keeps the way open to possibly closer relations at a later date.

* * * *

Britain's temporizing attitude does not look as benevolent to the eyes of the continental nation as in British protestations about it. It is quite possible, if this development should lead to a great revival of Europe in the form of a new kind of multi-lingual federation (which is quite possible) that we shall think it would have been wiser to be a founder member. We know all the reasons that have made full co-operation seem to us politically impossible. Probably the deepest is our feeling that we already belong to a world-community, that of the English-speaking peoples. This is an imperfect answer to the question

who is our neighbour. It is also connected with a kind of insularity which we shall have to overcome, if we are to cope with the change in our political-geographical position that is now more than probable.

Music, Scripture and Verse

Poets and musicians, as well as the kings of the earth, are to bring their glory and honour into Christ's Church, and in an age when appreciation of the arts is happily increasing they should be given more scope in the forms of public worship. A new form of service, which may commend itself for wider adoption, is to be used for the first time on Wednesday, 29th October, at Christ Church, North Finchley. It bears some resemblance to the Nine Lessons Carol service which has become popular at Christmas, but its ten sections cover all the main seasons and events of the Christian Year and each section includes a reading from Scripture, a reading of poetry, and music, either vocal or instrumental. Dr. G. T. Thalben-Ball is responsible for the music and Mr. Stephen Jack for the readings.

SOME NEGLECTED ASPECTS OF THE WELFARE STATE

THE only reason why I venture to raise my voice in this discussion is because I think that many of the wider issues involved in the social legislation of our day do not receive the attention they deserve. Political forces are very evenly balanced in our midst and political leaders have to be preoccupied with innumerable day-to-day problems, all invariably described as "crises". Their temptation is, therefore, to ignore those considerations whose relevance is not immediately apparent. They cannot be blamed too severely for this, because they have the right to expect help in remembering these considerations from a larger body of opinion, and that help has not been forthcoming as it should. Politicians depend far more than is often realized upon political scientists, economists, journalists, sociologists and theologians for preliminary clarification of the aims of the society they serve and for the fashion-

ing of the terms which are the currency of popular political discussion. The stale and uninspiring character of so much political thinking to-day, when it needs more than ever to be fresh and creative, is due at least as much to the failure of these other groups to do their jobs properly as it is to the limitations of the hard-pressed politicians. It is as a contribution from a penitent member of the larger group that the following observations are made. They are, of course, not intended to provide anything more than a basis for discussion.

It is perfectly clear that the situation created by the introduction of a more elaborate and extensive form of social insurance, together with other benefits like school meals and family allowances, neither ushers in a new Golden Age dated from July 1945 nor represents a revolutionary break with the past which shakes the foundations of our national existence. It is simply, from one point of view, one more adjustment of various interests to each other or, from another point of view, one more attempt to achieve a better and more equitable ordering of the resources of society, of the kind which is constantly going on in a dynamic community. Modern technology and industry created immense new wealth which encouraged the growth of a much larger population with more complicated and diversified needs than had ever been known before. In the early stages of this development, men were more occupied with exploiting its opportunities than with wondering whether the wealth they produced was being equitably distributed, or whether the whole process was socially desirable.

Now, however, several circumstances combine to render this unself-conscious approach impossible. First, the tendency of modern industrial organization itself is towards more centralized control. Power has to be concentrated if decisions are to be taken which retain some measure of human control over the vast and ever-growing industrial machine. Also the influence which industry has over men's

lives is so great, and its parts are so interdependent, that the question of the nature of the control becomes one of the first political importance. Secondly, those who derived the smallest advantages from industrialization, the hired workers, have by now had time and opportunity to organize and educate themselves, and are in a position effectively to demand that their interests be considered. They want not only a larger share of the rewards of modern industry, which for this purpose may include agriculture, than their fathers had, but also a recognition of their status in society. They are in revolt against being treated merely as "hands". Although they may not always express it in such terms, they are demanding that human values be given due priority over economic values once more.

It is considerations such as these which have led to the great increase in the power of the state in our time and to its "welfare" character. While the increase in the power of the state clearly raises grave questions which have still not received adequate examination, the extension of such minimal security as society as a whole can provide to the whole population is surely to be welcomed as a great advance by all except the most irresponsibly privileged. The more militant socialists may be constrained to point out that it would never have happened apart from the political pressure of organized Labour and they may well be right, human nature being what it is, but they need not go on to claim that that proves that in all circumstances you "cannot trust the Tories". Those sections of the community represented by the Conservative Party are as subject to the limitations of outlook and sympathy imposed upon them by their own social and economic situation as any other groups, but a modest satisfaction may be derived from the fact that most of them have given up some of their privileges with a better grace than most privileged classes in history and by now sincerely recognize the justice and desirability of most of the "welfare" provisions made by the state.

Out-of-Date Controversies

Whatever may have been the case in the past, therefore, a good deal of political fighting on these matters has become sham fighting, and politicians, who may understandably be too tired to stop it of their own volition, should be told firmly how boring the rest of us find it. The Welfare State has been the product of a long social process, and the chief impulse in its production has not lain in the wills of politicians of any party but in the need to utilize the benefits and repair the ravages of modern industry, a need greatly intensified by the social integration created by two major wars. Now it is with us, it is likely to remain. And it is absurd to imply that its most recent achievements are startlingly great and original by pretending that the dangers they bring with them are novel and fearful. The way some people talk suggests that it no longer need matter to a worker whether he is in employment or not and that it is now the case that the rich are immeasurably worse off than the poor, while the orgies of self-pity in which some members of the middle-class indulge when they weep about their alleged "liquidation" would be nauseating were it not so ludicrous. Not all professional groups have been as skilful as the doctors and university professors in obtaining a state guarantee of maintenance at a level not far off from that which they enjoyed in the relatively palmy days of 1939, and a few have suffered genuine hardship, but for the most part the privileged still remain in possession of their privileges and the benefits conferred by the Welfare State do little more than alleviate the lot of those in greatest need.

I would suggest, therefore, that one of the first needs of an informed Christian discussion of the Welfare State is that we try to cut through the cant, self-righteousness and self-pity which too often surround it. We need to get off our ideological high horses, stop fighting the battles of a generation ago and modernize our intellectual equipment.

A good deal more fundamental research may need to be done before we know what form that modernization should take, but it would be a point gained if we recognized the need. And actually there is already a good deal more material available than has come into everyday use. It has been evident for a long time that, as the more immediate evils incidental upon the Industrial Revolution are mitigated, the need for dealing with the more long-range problems with which it confronts us becomes more and more urgent. The world-wide stirring among the depressed masses of mankind, who are aspiring towards a richer and fuller life than they have ever known before, combined with our immensely enhanced gifts both for exploitation and conservation of the resources of our progressively unified world, makes it imperative that we go into the whole question of our stewardship of the "estate of man", to quote the title of Michael Roberts' posthumously published book on this subject. A good deal of work has been done on this matter, both by governments and by individuals, and we are familiar with the findings of men like Mannheim and Mumford, of groups like our own Christendom group, and of numerous governmental and inter-governmental agencies. But little of this has been translated into relevant political terms. How many people are there at work, in politics or close to politics, on framing a new national policy for Britain in the light of our changed relation to America, world food, mineral and raw material supplies, the industrial development of Eastern countries and the Commonwealth, and our new-found convictions about the importance of maintaining full employment? Obviously there are some, but every politician who makes a week-end speech or a broadcast about how good or bad times were in the 1930s or on the importance of further nationalization or on the virtues of leaving overseas buying in the hands of the trade "who know their business", should be made by his party organization to write a carefully documented essay on one or other of these subjects as an appropriate penance.

This is a question which should be exercising both political parties, but there are other matters in relation to the future of the Welfare State which are the special concern of each particular party.

The Moral Cost of a Welfare State

It appears to be fairly widely recognized in the Labour Party that the present period must be one of taking stock and re-examining the assumptions upon which the party's policy has been based. The recently published Fabian Society lectures, especially those by R. H. S. Crossman¹ and Austen Albu² are a very conscious expression of this. Incidentally, both these lectures illustrate the extent to which the Christian origin and inspiration of the Socialist movement is being affirmed in these days. This is happening both among the "advanced" and the "moderate" members of the Party and even more emphatically among the "intellectuals" than among the trade-unionists. This is, of course, in striking contrast to the situation of twenty years ago. Whatever its significance and however little content may have been given to it as yet, this is one of the most interesting developments of the present time and one to which Christian thought should quickly respond.

Many leaders of the Labour party will admit that they are in the position to-day of men who set out to erect a great building without first sitting down to count the cost. We hear a great deal from the opponents of socialism about the heavy financial strain which the Welfare State imposes upon the country, but the moral cost is no less high. It needs to be made clear where this cost comes. I am sure it is not the case that the benefits which the Welfare State confers are such that they induce any widespread slackness among the

¹ *Socialist Values in a Changing Society* (Fabian Tract, No. 286).

² *Socialism and the Study of Man* (Fabian Tract, No. 283).

See also, *Fabian Essays*, published since this paper was written (Turnstile Press, 15s.).

rank-and-file of the workers. It may be arguable that full employment does this, but it is only among the chronically shiftless and incompetent, who would be problems in any society, that family allowances, public assistance and school meals for their children help produce the kind of attitude which makes them not care whether they work or not. Once more, we must not exaggerate the difference all these benefits make. It still matters a very great deal to the average person, both as far as his income and his sense of status are concerned, whether he is in a job or not. The high moral cost of the Welfare State is to be found in other directions than these.

The Welfare State makes heavy demands upon the sense of public responsibility which is diffused throughout the community. A considerable number of its citizens must be prepared to work for the common good and sometimes to subordinate their sectional interests to that common good. That again is obvious enough, and is true in some degree of every society, but it becomes a matter of urgency that it should be clearly recognized in the kind of closely-knit society we have to-day. For socialists it involves the realization that the Welfare State can be wrecked just as much by irresponsibility among the workers as it can by irresponsibility among employers or financiers. It is greatly to the credit of the trade union leaders that they have seen this, and often tried hard to act upon it, but it is not always given the weight it deserves in the making of socialist policy. The plain truth is that a country cannot take much more socialism than its moral health can stand. It is a good question whether Britain can stand much more than it has on the political level and whether more work of education in responsibility does not need to be done on other levels before we can be safely entrusted with more political socialism.

The moral cost of the Welfare State is so high partly because it intensifies the drive which modern technological society itself produces towards centralized control. It

obviously strengthens the power of the state over men's lives, and any move which does that is giving hostages to fortune. It becomes increasingly important to inquire what manner of men they are who run the state, and what likelihood there is that there will be sufficient informed and vigorous public opinion to ensure that they will run it democratically. It is one of the many surreptitious naïvetés of which Mr. Bevan is guilty that he sees no problem here, and is completely happy to throw more and more power into the hands of Parliament, in the serene assurance that that necessarily implies democratic control, always assuming, of course, that the Labour Party is in power. Yet surely it is clear that a bad policy does not become a good one simply because it is initiated by the government. It simply means that the policy can be pursued with greater ruthlessness and effectiveness if, in the view of the party in power, the short-term interests of the state demands it. Open-cast mining provides a very good case in point. As Mr. Crossmann recognizes in the lecture already referred to, the excessive concentration of power in the hands of the state can become an enemy of social responsibility itself.

Problems for Socialists

Now that socialism has come of age, it can no longer escape the necessity of thinking much more concretely and realistically than has been its wont about the nature of the relationships upon which the effective functioning of society depends. A simple-minded policy of nationalization of industry does not begin to do justice to the delicacy and the complexity of those relationships. Not only does it produce what is at best national socialism, which intensifies between nations the cut-throat competition which it deplors between individuals and corporations, but also it can easily drain away the vitality from nearly all those relationships between individuals and groups in which a sense of direct responsibility to society can find expression. The tendency is to allow only the planner at the top the privilege of a

responsible decision. Although the Ministry of Health were conscious of the dangers of excessive centralization, it is widely resented in the country that local hospitals no longer have such a say in the management of their own affairs, and I hear rumours, how well authenticated I cannot say, of irresponsibility in local administration of some of the nationalized industries, because they no longer provide effective foci for the loyalty of their staffs. It is, of course, possible that this may be due to mere conservatism and that new patterns of loyalty will emerge in time in these organizations, but these things do not happen automatically. Any effectively practising organization of people for constructive purposes represents a very considerable achievement of civilization. That is true of such mundane bodies as I.C.I. and Lloyds Bank and the Cunard Company, as well as of the trade unions, the churches and the universities, and they cannot be pulled down and rebuilt overnight according to the will of politicians without losing something essential. It seems to me that there need be nothing inimical to the humane and empirical spirit of British socialism in recognizing this fact about social relations and in framing policy to meet it. It is surely healthier to build, wherever possible, on the foundations already laid by existing organizations than to make a virtue of creating new ones.

That this point has not been clearly seen earlier by socialists has been largely due both to the influence on their thinking of an inadequate conception of man¹ and to the mystique of the class struggle engendered by Marxism. Now that the state has so much power that it can almost be called "Socialistic" and now that that power is officially dedicated to human welfare, socialism needs a change of spirit. It must see that it bends its energies to healing rather than to exacerbating class divisions. Mr. Morrison, prompted maybe by the need to woo the middle-class voter—which is not necessarily an unsound or discreditable

¹ See Austen Albu's interesting lecture referred to above.

politician's motive—has a stronger sense of reality here than Mr. Bevan, brooding with the long and bitter memory of the Celt on the injustices of the past. More than any other form of society, welfare socialism demands a co-operative attitude on the part of all its members, and it should go to a good deal of trouble to avoid situations where one group pulls against another. It is true that the privileges of some have to be reduced, and that this will inevitably provoke tensions; but at all costs action which is vindictive, doctrinaire, patronizing or jealous should be avoided. To put it more positively, socialism should henceforward base its appeal to the country on the fact that the state cannot survive as the servant of human welfare unless there is a greatly enhanced family feeling throughout the whole community. It should be the task of Christians within the Socialist party to state what that would mean in concrete and practical terms. They would be greatly helped in doing so if the common life of the churches set a clearer example of what true family life should be.

Tasks for Non-Socialists

The distinctive tasks of non-socialists in relation to the Welfare State may be less obvious, because they have made less aggressive claims to be its architects, but they are no less important. I hope that Conservatives will not object if they are taken, in the remarks that follow, broadly to represent those sections of the community who possess most of the advantages conferred by wealth and education and who may therefore claim to know what is best and most worthy of preservation in the old-established ways of this country. I am not necessarily implying that any odium attaches to them for that, only particular responsibilities and opportunities of which they should be aware.

For example, I believe that Conservatives are fully within their rights in emphasizing the grave dangers which arise for personal freedom in a society which is organized too closely from the centre. The fact that the inevitable restric-

tions imposed by centralized organization may press harder upon themselves than upon those who are the more obvious beneficiaries of the Welfare State may sharpen their vision, but it does not invalidate it. At the same time, their contribution to the solution of this problem will be much more constructive if they acknowledge that the danger arises as much from the dynamic character of modern technology and industry as it does from any political programme. It is industry, much more than "the revolt of the masses", which without industry would have been impossible, which is the most revolutionary force in the modern world. It is against the totalitarian claims of industry that the sharpest fight for freedom has to be fought and, while the question of whether it should be controlled by financiers, managers or politicians is important, it is not necessarily of the first importance. If it is true that the concentration of political and economic power in the same hands may lead to a tyranny more rigid than that ever achieved by corporations or banks, then Conservatives are under obligation to explain what alternative methods to government control there are which will make industry more socially responsible. If a policy of naïve nationalization is not enough, a policy of equally naïve anti-nationalization is also not enough. Most Conservatives would not, I hope, subscribe to the American business man's dogma that it is the sole function of government to ensure that business men are able to make as much money as quickly and easily as possible. But too often the ways they formulate their policy gives the impression that that is what they would like to do, were it not that practical necessity is too much for them. As a result, they have in the past, despite occasional lip-service to the ideals of Disraeli, frequently succeeded only in adding fuel to the revolutionary flame of heedless industrialization. It is a fair socialist complaint that they have done more to dissipate the heritage of the best of Britain's past than to cherish it. What is the Conservative version of planning for freedom, which will effectively subjugate industry to human purposes

without creating a new tyranny of the state? May I respectfully suggest that while little attention is paid to this question, the Conservative party will remain a party without a policy.

It is, however, one of the weaknesses of present-day politics that it is so exclusively concerned with economic questions. If the Welfare State is to function, many other considerations than the narrowly economic must be taken into account. And there are several matters which Conservatives, in so far as they are the party of inherited wealth and education, should make their responsibility. The following might be held to be of special concern to Christians.

Dangers to Freedom

First, there are many other points as well as the economic on which the fight for freedom has to be fought. Resisting the over-officious claims of bureaucracy to interfere with people's private lives is often necessary, but it is also popular and gets publicity, and therefore it is not likely to be neglected. Other and less spectacular battles, however, have to be fought over a longer term, and they may easily go by default. A very good example of what I mean is provided by the situation of the independent schools in this country. Now, the right of parents to educate their children as they see fit, subject to agreed safeguards, is a fundamental human liberty. Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, however, recently said that he believed it should be made illegal for parents to pay for their children's education. If he was correctly reported in the press, this represents the threat of as grave an attack on human liberty as anything done in the industrial sphere, and Mr. Wyatt should be taken up with the utmost sharpness. Yet everyone can understand the motives which prompted this apparently callow and frivolous utterance. The independent schools are used as instruments for fostering notions of caste and privilege, which undermine the sense of family solidarity which this country needs.

If Conservatives, therefore, are in earnest about preserving the independent schools as bastions of personal freedom, they must exercise considerable ingenuity to help these schools have a better and healthier relation to the state system and to society in general. Now I am very well aware of how much is being done in this direction already by the schools themselves. But more needs to be done, and much more should be done by the Conservative Party, to encourage parents, who are much worse offenders than the schools, in a different attitude towards the relation between private and public education.

Scope for Cultural Enterprise

Secondly, if Conservatives are serious and not merely guilty of humbug in their mission to preserve what is best in the old and tried ways of common life in this country, they should welcome the opportunity provided by the improved status of sections of the community formerly depressed, to extend more widely the high standards of culture and civilization held previously only by the privileged few. If, however, the prosperous and educated are going to claim, because they are not quite as well off as they were, that they are no longer able to set standards of decency, orderliness, refinement and public service in the community, that proves the contention of their opponents that the basis for their former leadership was purely economic. Ill-tempered whining about the alleged mediocrity and drabness of post-war England by representatives of the so-called middle and upper-classes may be only the work of a minority, but it is the surest indication that those who are guilty of it are no longer worthy of the privileges they have enjoyed. The Conservative Party should refuse to make any political capital out of such an attitude. Its Angela Thirkells should be treated in the same way as fellow-travellers are in the Labour party.

Similarly, it may well be that our whole society, as reflected in our politics, has been too exclusively pre-

occupied with material considerations in recent times. What group in society are better equipped to remind their fellows that, after all, man does not live by bread alone than those who, having known wealth and possessing the benefits of education, are now in greatly reduced circumstances? If it is no longer quite so easy as it was for them to make money, they may be grateful to be delivered from some of the temptations money brings. Perhaps some of them may be induced to spend less time and energy in the pursuit of money, and to dedicate themselves to plainer living and higher thinking, to study, to the cultivation of the languishing arts and to prayer. Whatever may be the case in the economic realm, there is still infinite scope for private enterprise in the other departments of life, and who are better placed to take advantage of it than the apostles of personal freedom?

DANIEL JENKINS.

FROM A FRONTIER COMMONPLACE BOOK

“The divine can mean no single quality; it must mean a group of qualities, by being champions of which in alternations, different men may all find worthy missions.”

WILLIAM JAMES.

“Liberty is the delicate fruit of a mature civilization.”

LORD ACTON.

“History itself, apart from its delight, is of no use except in what it demonstrates of the truth of the Christian religion, which cannot be demonstrated otherwise than by history.”

LEIBNIZ.

“It is only by the effort to understand God that we come to realize that God transcends our understanding.”

FREDERICK C. COPLESTONE.

SOCIAL AND ETHICAL PROBLEMS OF TUBERCULOSIS

This is the substance of a paper read to the Medical Section of the Christian Frontier. It has been revised for publication by the author, to incorporate points made in the discussion that followed.

PULMONARY tuberculosis is one of the few communicable diseases yet unconquered by medical science. The reasons for this are many and varied. It is spread by the causative bacteria being coughed into the air, from where they can be inhaled by other persons in close proximity to the sufferer. It is usually a chronic disease which may exist in an infectious form for some years with relatively small impairment of health; and it is common to find infectious tuberculosis in persons who insist that they are in robust health. There may be no external signs of disease. It is difficult to detect without the help of X-rays and even when disease is discovered radiologically it is sometimes hard to determine whether such disease is active and thus a potential danger to the patient and to other people.

The bacilli of tuberculosis can cause disease in any part of the body, but it is only when they exist in the lungs that they are capable of transmission to other people. If the reservoir of bacilli in diseased lungs could be eradicated, then other forms of tuberculosis would rapidly disappear. Milk is no longer a serious source of tuberculous infection, at least in so far as the south of England is concerned.

The disease has been a problem from the earliest times. Aristotle, in the "Problems", is amazingly close to the truth as we understand it to-day, 2300 years after his lifetime:

"Why, when one comes near consumptives, or people with ophthalmia or the itch, does one contract this disease, while one does not contract dropsy, apoplexy, fever or many other ills? With the consumptives, the reason is that the breath is bad and heavy. In

approaching the consumptive one breathes the pernicious air. One takes the disease because there is in this air something disease-producing."

King Edward VII, in giving his support to the pioneering work of the National Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, coined the famous phrase—"Preventable! Why not prevented?" These two utterances contain the essence of the social and ethical problems of tuberculosis.

The problem of dealing with most of the other common infectious diseases is much simpler. Their duration and the period of their infectivity are relatively short. Sufferers are obviously ill. The case for segregation is strong and few decline to co-operate in plans to stop the spread of these diseases. Nevertheless, civilized Christian society has found it necessary to introduce compulsory measures of segregation in the interests of protecting its members. The same ethical problem arises regarding the segregation of those suffering from tuberculosis and leprosy. Has society the moral right to restrict the activities of some of its members because they have a *chronic* disease which is capable of being transmitted to others?

Tuberculosis and leprosy have many features in common and stand apart from all the other afflictions of mankind. They are similar in the pathological reactions they cause and the causative organisms have many resemblances one to another. It is strange that such different attitudes regarding segregation have grown up with regard to these two diseases. Lepers are zealously isolated in most parts of the world, whereas in most countries the tuberculous are allowed to go freely amongst their fellow men. This disparity is a source of deep resentment among educated lepers and certainly there is no scientific or ethical justification for it. Tuberculosis is probably the more infectious of the two.

A dilemma confronts Christian doctors and administrators who face this problem. The difference in attitude is patently and morally wrong, but in seeking to alter this,

in which direction should the alteration be? Should the lepers go free or should the tuberculous be condemned to compulsory segregation, with the consequent serious curtailment of their personal liberties, while they remain infectious? This leads in turn to the problem of deciding by what criteria should a patient be regarded as infectious. Determination of infectivity is by no means easy in many cases.

In attempting to formulate a solution to these problems it will be useful to consider some of the practical problems facing those who deal with tuberculosis in this country. When a patient is found to have pulmonary tuberculosis the home is visited and all the other members of the household (or "contacts" as they are called) are asked to attend the chest clinic for X-ray examination. The object of this is the detection of other cases of the disease. The success of this work (which reveals about 20 new cases of tuberculosis for every 1,000 "contacts" examined) depends largely on the personality, persuasiveness and perseverance of the Health Visitors whose job it is. No legal compulsion can be brought to bear, even when several members of a household have developed tuberculosis and it is known that a person with a chronic cough also lives there but refuses to attend for examination. Distraught mothers, aware of the danger, sometimes come saying—"The children *will* go and play with Grandpa, and he takes no care about his coughing". There are persons who, aware of the nature of their illness, prefer to ignore treatment and carry on their normal life until the disease is far advanced and they themselves are beyond all hope of recovery. Such people have no regard for others who may contract the disease as a result of this policy.

The introduction of compulsory measures for the segregation of infectious cases would throw a very unwelcome burden on chest physicians, who would have to decide which cases are in fact infectious. Treatment in sanatoria may take anything from six months to two years and this period

of separation from home life is liable to result in disharmony in the home.

Tuberculosis is a world problem and measures for dealing with it vary widely in different countries. They are intimately bound up with the general standards of hygiene, nutrition and housing that prevail. They are dependent upon the standard of education of the people as a whole. The treatment of tuberculosis must go hand in hand with the improvement of the standard of living. It is no use developing elaborate and costly schemes of treatment if the patients, when cured, have to return to living conditions conducive to the return of their disease. Economic factors may render it impossible to develop backward areas in this way and either the raising of the standard of living or the treatment of the sick must take precedence. Ethically, which should receive priority—the treatment of the sick or the protection of the healthy?

A considered Christian answer to the problem of the moral right of compulsion is needed. There is the possibility that, in some parts of the world, non-Christian administrators with totalitarian power may tackle the situation without any consideration for Christian ideals. In parts of China some time ago the leper problem was “solved” by shooting all the lepers! In parts of Africa the tuberculous are segregated from the general population and their own families, and little attempt is made to restore them to health. Sufferers know that there is little chance of their returning to their homes.

The advent of the Welfare State in this country has emphasized the patient's responsibility towards the community and the responsibility of the community for every individual of whom it is concerned. The State is now fulfilling its responsibilities and providing free treatment for all, in so far as the taxpayer's pocket will allow. It is certainly falling short of the ideal as evidenced by the waiting list for sanatorium beds, though this is partly due

to lack of nurses. In return the patient must face certain moral obligations in accepting these facilities. These obligations are important in relation to tuberculosis. Many of the patients are young. The disease is infectious and it may relapse and become chronic. Treatment is designed to get the disease so well healed that the patient will be able to return to a useful occupation without the likelihood of his disease breaking out again. This takes many months and often involves operative procedures. Is a patient morally justified in accepting treatment sufficient to enable him to regain his health and strength temporarily, while refusing other measures which are likely to ensure lasting control of his disease? Premature discharge from hospital often results in early deterioration and reactivation of disease. Economically, it is unsatisfactory to have a patient return to hospital time after time, when energetic prolonged treatment in the first instance might have avoided this. It is right that the patient himself should decide whether an operation should be performed upon his own body, but his responsibilities towards other members of the community should be clearly explained to, and understood by, him before he makes his decision.

Any chronic illness is a severe test of family ties and tuberculosis more than most; partly because of its infectivity and partly because so often it strikes down persons who are in the prime of life. Its advent in a family is always an economic disaster. Despite increased financial assistance for tuberculous patients there is a strong tendency to cut short the treatment and return to work too soon. This tendency is often aggravated when tuberculous families have been rehoused. Rehousing is important in order that overcrowding may be relieved, but it often leads to higher rent, higher expenditure on fares and consequently a lowering of the standard of living. The faithfulness of many families is really wonderful, but such a spirit is sometimes lacking. Its lack has increased noticeably since the advent of the National Health Service. A growing number

of the population seem to feel that the all-providing State should relieve them of all responsibility towards their kith and kin in times of adversity. This is one of the problems inherent in the principle of the Welfare State and can be overcome only by a wider acceptance and practice of Christ's teaching.

Therapeutic abortion is one of the problems to be faced when dealing with tuberculous patients. Pregnancy is an added strain on any woman who has active tuberculosis. It has been shown that women in all stages of the disease stand pregnancy and labour well, provided that both the pregnancy and the tuberculosis are skilfully treated. Thus there would seem to be little place for therapeutic abortion. However, in cases of active, progressive disease there is always the possibility that the coincidence of a pregnancy will prove the decisive factor in overwhelming the patient's resistance and thus cause her death; a death that might have been avoided. In patients for whom the immediate outlook is more favourable, the problem should be approached from a different standpoint. The effect of the pregnancy on the mother's chances of being alive in five, ten and twenty years must be assessed. Such assessment should take into consideration not only the effect of pregnancy and labour on the mother's health, but also such questions as: How is this mother with tuberculosis going to stand up to the extra duties entailed in bringing up this child? What are the housing conditions likely to be? Will help be available for the mother in carrying out her duties in the home? What will be the effect on the family's income of another mouth to feed? It is impossible to determine scientifically whether a pregnancy will have a deleterious effect on a patient's chances of survival, over ten or more years. So many intervening circumstances play a part in determining the outcome. However, the above factors should be considered if a decision has to be made whether a woman with tuberculosis should continue with any individual pregnancy. Undoubtedly there is nowadays a

far smaller need for therapeutic abortion in women who have tuberculosis.

Public health education is one of the widest avenues leading to the solution of many of these problems. The Scandinavian countries have led the world in this respect with the result that modern therapeutic and preventive measures have found a receptive public and willing co-operation. Yet education is not enough. People must be aware of their responsibilities and must be ready to shoulder them. This requires a deep change of heart both in this nation and elsewhere. There must be a widespread return to the practice of a living Christianity and especially of the Christian principle of self-sacrifice. If this were attained there would be no need for compulsory examinations designed to *discover* tuberculosis disease. Once the presence of the disease is known measures for the protection of other people, especially children, can be undertaken. Education can be intensified where it is most likely to bear fruit.

The case for compulsory segregation and treatment of known infective patients is more uncertain. It does not seem justifiable in this country at present. It is not right that sufferers should be forcibly confined in hospitals until the best known treatment is freely available to all who may require it. Furthermore, sufficient sanatorium or hospital accommodation must be available. The practical gain to the community in stopping the spread of disease has to be balanced against the loss through the disruption of family life which compulsory segregation would entail. Laws exist in certain parts of the United States and Canada whereby those "who are a danger to others" can be detained in hospital compulsorily if they refuse to take necessary steps voluntarily. These laws do not apply to all infectious patients but only to cases where that infection is considered to be dangerous by reason of the patient's living conditions, habits and physical state. It is found that such powers are not used very often. It is in keeping with the tolerant attitude existing in this country that the

approximately one hundred lepers known to be in the country are allowed their freedom.

Compulsory segregation has a stronger claim in backward areas where educational standards are low. In many areas the prevention of the spread of tuberculosis is an integral part of any programme for raising the standard of living and prosperity of the people. Humane and efficient treatment must be provided for those requiring it if such measures are employed. The problem remains—"Has a Christian community the right to demand isolation of some of its members in order that they should not injure other members by transmitting disease?"

Tuberculosis is indisputably an organic disease, yet the powers of body, mind and spirit all play a part in the patient's attempt to overcome his disease. Personality and a living faith exert a marked effect on the outlook regarding recovery. Mental as well as physical relaxation is essential to those undergoing treatment. It is apparent, from his writings, why John Keats was never able to attain this relaxation and thus succumbed to tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five after an illness lasting only a few years. Robert Louis Stevenson, on the other hand, fought off its ravages for twenty years. The needs of those suffering from tuberculosis are summed up in his beautiful little prayer:

"God grant to me courage, gaiety of spirit and tranquility of mind."

D. J. CHARLEY.

ABSOLUTE JUSTICE

A LAWYER'S APPROACH

AT the beginning of the Christian Era a man could face his judges with the words: "We ought to obey God rather than men". Centuries later, those who framed the American Declaration of Independence could appeal confidently to the "laws of Nature and of Nature's God". At Nuremberg an echo of this sentiment can be detected in the words of the Soviet judge, Rudenko, when he spoke of offences against "the principles of law" and "the most elementary standards of human morality".

The jurist no longer looks to God as the final sanction of law, and has lost confidence in the appeal to Natural Law. This distrust of the transcendent sanction cannot fairly be dismissed as the consequence of a secular mode of thought and, still less, as being motivated by antipathy to religion. The appeal to God and to Nature had become a cloak of confusion under which the central problem of jurisprudence could be conveniently forgotten while the rulers of men deceived themselves and their fellows into believing that their own notion of justice enjoyed the patronage of the Divine Majesty or, at the least, sprang out of the very constitution of the Universe.

But the jurist, though he was able to discredit the illegitimate appeal to a false absolute, was hard put to it to locate the natural roots of the law. He recognized that respect for law was the foundation of any society, but he was unable to express an opinion as to why the law itself was *respectable*. His inclination was to hand over the problem to the general philosopher and to build the science of jurisprudence upon foundation of the law as he found it, ready made, without asking awkward questions as to its ultimate source. Thus the law could be defined simply as *that which the law-giver declares to be the law*, and the task of jurisprudence was to subject the corpus of existing law to analysis and classification.

In a benevolent despotism or in a reasonably satisfactory democracy there is little incentive to probe further but, when a Nazi wind blows across Europe, such a system of jurisprudence is found to be built upon the sand ; it cannot withstand any severe ideological tempest. If a man can call bitter sweet and sweet bitter in a world that has no final means of deciding which is which, we are defenceless against that man. If law is what the law-giver declares to be the law, what answer shall be given to the storm-trooper who defends his wickedness by proving that he acted in loyal, self-sacrificial obedience to the Nazi law propounded by his Führer ?

The lawyers have no answer that brings conviction. The philosophers speak with discordant voices. The scientists officially declare that it is none of their business, though individual scientists, shocked at their own potency in a lawless international world, take a different line and betray hopeful signs of moral leadership.

The theologian would wish the jurist to return to the *lex aeterna*, for he is justifiably fearful of the slough of relativism into which the law has fallen. Unless the law finds its roots again he is convinced that justice will be frittered away in expediency and that the judges of the earth will lend their authority to the projects of those who sit in the seat of the mighty. But the theologian's invitation contains a concealed danger, for the pursuit of absolute, or ideal, justice resolves itself, on analysis, into a return to a new and more dangerous phase of relativism.

It is attractive to assume that our imperfect justice mirrors, however inadequately, a perfect justice against which we can test our failures, a *lex aeterna* beside which we can humbly place our human laws. The argument may be illustrated from the absolutely straight line of Euclid. We are well aware that there is no absolutely straight line in our experience, but we carry within us the ideal straight line against which we may test the imperfect lines we draw. So, too with justice.

The illustration reveals the fallacy. The Euclidean straight line is satisfactory because the notion of an absolutely straight line is shared by Greeks and Romans, Christians and Witch-doctors, Americans and Russians, old men and children, and even across the sex-barrier, men and women. This is not true of "absolute justice", and if we deceive ourselves into thinking it is so, we shall credit these diverse persons and groups with having the same notion of justice as we ourselves have. If our wives and children, or the Americans or Russians, dissent from us we shall denounce them as offending against God's holy law. The "absolute justice" we believe in turns out to be no more than our notion of what absolute justice is, or ought to be.

This erroneous approach to the problem of the ultimate sanction of the law is tenable only because men tend to form relatively homogeneous societies with certain basic assumptions upon which all their members are more or less content to build their particular system of law. To short-circuit the inquiry by equating our ideal of justice with some transcendent Ideal Justice is to drag the *lex aeterna* into the arena of relativism.

The argument breaks down at an even deeper level. The Euclidean straight line may be good enough for me; but it is not good enough for the astronomer, and if he relies upon it he will fall into perceptible and significant errors in his calculations. What may be sufficient for practical purposes in one range of experience may prove fraudulent when the range of experience is extended. The classical-christian ideal of justice may have served us well enough in a small world pervaded by well-defined assumptions, but in a world of "iron curtains" and radically differing "ideologies" we can no longer assume that our sense of justice necessarily enjoys an eternal sanction.

If this be so, where shall we turn to escape from the slough of relativism? This is not a mere academic point for discussion by lawyers; it goes to the root of our present disintegration.

We must resist the delusively attractive temptation to appeal directly to a world outside our experience. Our experience gives us the strongest possible grounds for acknowledging that such a world exists, and that our experience is itself dependent upon, and relative to, that world; but we can come to terms with it *only through experience*. The fact that God is known only through experience does not mean that God is dependent upon our experience, but that our experience depends upon, and is relative to, a reality beyond experience. The acceptance of our relative status offers the best hope—the only hope—of coming into living relationship with that which, lying beyond experience, breaks in upon experience. The attempt to break out of the net of our relativity by a direct appeal to some external ideal or absolute offers no such hope; paradoxically, it throws us back into a disguised relativism.

When we freely recognize our inescapable relativity we make a remarkable discovery. The relativity itself is found to be *absolutely* comprehensive. So deeply is this the case that, when we encounter any fact of experience that seems not to “fit in”, we cannot rest until we have solved the puzzle. In attempting to solve it we are sustained by the faith that there *is* a solution, and that the apparent breach in the perfect correspondence we have learned to expect must result either from mistaken observation or an erroneous preconception. Our entire rational life depends upon this sense that everything is ultimately relative to everything, that the universe mirrored in our experience is a “together-hang”. If this be true, we need not stretch out pathetic hands to the Absolute; we need rather, to repent and accept as little children the overwhelming fact that we are already caught fast in the meshes of the Absolute. The choice is between making an “absolute” in our own image to worship, and the frank acknowledgement that we already lie in the hands of the living God.

The fact that everything is relative to everything can be expressed in one significant word—*integrity*. The scientist

can only be a scientist by virtue of his scientific faith that the Universe is characterized by integrity. He knows the condition—the moral condition—that is necessary to comprehend this integrity: it is an answering integrity. He who would learn the secrets of nature must attend upon nature with clean hands and a pure heart. If the scientist falsifies the pointer-reading, or refuses to give that reading the weight it demands, he deceives himself and creates bad science. The scientist must constantly search his heart, repenting daily of any impure desire to preserve a theory or to protect his own preconception from the assault of truth. Over the portals of the temple of science are written the words: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see. . ." And this is a spiritual truth of universal validity.

How does this apply to the quest for justice?

The scientist relies upon what is *given*. He calls this his "data". He also recognizes the obligation to enter into research, to seek and to find. The Hebrews knew that law, also, is *given*, and the German lawyers round off that insight in their juristic phrase: *das Recht finden*, the *found* law. These are not alternative doctrines of law, for what is found is what is given, and if it were not given it could not be found.

At first sight this return, via relativity, to the authority of the absolute may seem to be as objectionable as the appeal to the absolute which we have rejected. If integrity is the test, are we not plunged once more into the despair of an unbridled subjectivity? Is it any safer to rely upon our notion of integrity than upon our notion of justice?

A complete answer to these questions would require a careful analysis of the nature of integrity in its unitary sense of *wholeness* and *truth*; but we can indicate, in a parable, the direction in which the answer lies.

When St. Peter declared that Jesus was the Son of the Living God, Jesus knew that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him. Peter's vision was the hitherward aspect of a moment of Revelation. Was this experience of the fisherman subjective or objective? The question itself is

absurd, for at this level these terms are irrelevant. When that which is found is that which is given we have reached the deep source of authority; the whole Universe underwrites the word spoken by the fisherman, for the word of the fisherman is the Word of God. Will Peter's way lead us back into the slough of of relativism? According to Jesus this experience of vision, the prototype of every moment of vision, was to be the rock upon which He would dare to build His Church, and He was confident that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

This is a truth, a fundamental truth, that is as relevant for the scientist and the jurist in their limited fields, as it is for the theologian in his universal field. It is for the theologian to declare that they, with himself, are engaged upon the common task of exploring the works and the ways of God. The condition precedent of vision and of authority in each separate field is one and the same; and its total validity is manifested in the total field. The condition is that the seeker shall come to the search in full integrity, willing without reserve to be taught by what he encounters in the course of the search. We might, perhaps, embody this insight in a second general principle: "Blessed are the meek (i.e., the teachable) for they shall inherit . . ."

When scientist, lawyer, and theologian meet upon this common ground we shall have established a point of communion at which each can facilitate the solution of the fundamental problems common to them all.

SETON POLLOCK.

REVIEWS

Christ and Culture. By H. Richard Niebuhr. Faber & Faber, 21s.

The exact disposition towards cultural and civilizing activities that is proper to followers of Christ has always been a subject of perplexity and controversy. In recent years it has arisen in new and often startling forms, and has become one of the predominant themes of Christian writers. Even on the broad issue whether to affirm or to deny the claim of culture in general, at least five "typical" answers have, according to Dr. Richard Niebuhr, found influential expression in the history of Christendom. His book expounds these typical positions in their theological relations. He does not extend his typology to the actual forms in which cultural conflict occurs, either within Christendom or upon its frontiers with non-Christian systems. But that would be a different book altogether: simply as an up-to-date theology of culture, this must be one of the best books available.

The Christianity of Main Street. By Theodore O. Wedel, with a Foreword by the Bishop of London. Macmillan, 7s. 6d.

This is a forthright exposure of the philosophy of the typical Christian humanist of the United States, the Christian of Main Street. The product of the study of comparative religion and of the fervour of self-conscious democracy, the Christian humanist lives in a one-storey world, where mere man reaches for ideals inspired by the example of the Galilean Preacher of the golden rule: he sees his religion as only one of many sources of the ethical and human values necessary to democratic society. Canon Wedel attacks this position in its own terms with a vigorous defence of classical Christianity.

It is interesting to compare the American position with our own. In this country too the major obstacle to the conversion of pagans is the dead weight of the lapsed baptized. But the Englishman doesn't welcome the church as an ally of progressive society. He had his children "done", and for the rest he leaves "the church" to its own business, which is to him incomprehensible, irrelevant and quaintly Victorian.

For fifty years since Darwin, the hymns and theology of the church's public ministrations marked time behind industrial progress and secular thought. Canon Wedel stands in the tradition of G. K. Chesterton, Miss Sayers, C. S. Lewis and T. S. Eliot in the return to

orthodoxy, as far as books can recall the unreading laity. Americans since Gettysburg perhaps live by the spoken word: in this country the lapsed are being recalled more surely by the fellowship that the report "Towards the Conversion of England" called "the missing half of church life". The return of biblical theology—may I say from Barnes to Kenyon—is found in the context of the parish meeting and the army church house, where classical Christianity is rediscovered in the fellowship of Christians who seriously set out to live by theology. It is for the "dominant minority" who will lead the return, not for the citizens of Main Street themselves, that Canon Wedel's book will be most valuable.

J. G. ROBINSON.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

MODERN POETRY AND THE MODERN MIND

Sir,

The phrase about a "more refined" religion "after Christianity has passed away" in Brother Every's article on Modern Poetry must, I presume, be, like the preceding sentence, what "many imagine" to be T. S. Eliot's idea. But as printed it looks like Brother Every's own, and as such doctrine from such a source has offended readers who will not trust a schoolmaster's assertion that it is reported speech may we have Mr. Every's authority for replacing the preceding point by a colon?

C. G. RICH.

Headmaster, The Cathedral School, Bristol.

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Brother George Every writes:

I am sorry that I overlooked a point of punctuation in adapting what was typed as a talk to serve as an article. I hope it is now clear that in the first part of this paragraph I am considering, not the intentions of poets, but the sense of their poems to the non-Christian majority of their readers.

THE SOCRATIC

Foreword by
JOHN WISDOM

These papers by contemporary Oxford philosophers were first read to the Oxford University Socratic Club, a group founded eleven years ago under the Presidentship of Mr. C. S. Lewis, as an open forum for Christians and agnostics to discuss topics relevant to the Christian Faith's claim to be true.

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